

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-33. (canceled)

34. (new) A breakaway connector, comprising:

a ring shaped body having

an orifice therein forming an eye, and

a slot extending from the eye to an outside surface of the ring shaped body, the slot bisecting a side of the ring shaped body and forming first and second end portions in the body, each of said end portions being positioned on an opposite side of the slot;

first and second passageways extending through the first and second end portions, respectively, the first passageway having a longitudinal central axis that is oriented at a non-zero angle with respect to a longitudinal central axis of the second passageway, wherein each of the first and second passageways extend from opposite outside surfaces of the ring shaped body and meet to communicate with each other at the slot; and

a web extending transversely across and within one of the first and second passageways, the web being of smaller cross section than the ring shaped body such that the web forms a weakened region for receiving a rope to be released when a predetermined loading is transmitted to the web from the rope thereby causing the weakened region to fail;

wherein the first and second passageways are arranged such that the rope can be inserted into the ring shaped body through one of said passageways to extend across the slot into another of

said passageways and bend round the web to double back upon itself thereby exiting the body through the same passageway through which the rope entered the body.

35. (new) The breakaway connector of claim 34, wherein a material failure load of said web is from about 500 to about 600 lbs.

36. (new) The breakaway connector of claim 34, wherein said web has a notch in a central region of said web for accommodating, at least partially, a bent section of the rope being inserted in the first and second passageways to pass around said web.

37. (new) The breakaway connector of claim 34, wherein the angle between said first and second passageways is from about 30 to about 60 degrees.

38. (new) The breakaway connector of claim 34, wherein said first and second passageways are straight.

39. (new) A breakaway connection, comprising a rope and a breakaway connector; wherein said breakaway connector comprises:

a ring shaped body having

an orifice therein forming an eye, and

a slot extending from the eye to an outside surface of the ring shaped body, the slot bisecting a side of the ring shaped body and forming first and second end portions in the body, each of said end portions being positioned on an opposite side of the slot;

first and second passageways extending through the first and second end portions, respectively, the first passageway having a longitudinal central axis that is oriented at a non-zero angle with respect to a longitudinal central axis of the second passageway, wherein each of the first

and second passageways extend from opposite outside surfaces of the ring shaped body and meet to communicate with each other at the slot; and

a web extending transversely across and within one of the first and second passageways, the web being of smaller cross section than the ring shaped body such that the web forms a weakened region for receiving the rope to be released when a predetermined loading is transmitted to the web from the rope thereby causing the weakened region to fail; and

wherein the rope is inserted into the ring shaped body through one of said passageways to extend across the slot into another of said passageways and bend round the web to double back upon itself thereby exiting the body through the same passageway through which the rope entered the body.

40. (new) The connection of claim 39, wherein a length of said rope received in said body includes

first and second sections on opposite sides of said web, and

a bent section which connects said first and second sections and comes to rest on said web when one of the first and second sections of said rope is pulled.

41. (new) The connection of claim 40, wherein friction between (i) the first and second sections of said rope and (ii) at least one of said passageways and said web is sufficient to hold said rope against slipping within said passageways until said web fails.

42. (new) The connection of claim 40, wherein said rope includes a weakened portion which has a material failure load smaller than that of the web of said breakaway connector, so that said rope breaks before said web.

43. (new) The connection of claim 40, further comprising underwater gear connected to an end portion of said first section of said rope;

an end portion of said second section of said rope being left free without being tied up into a knot or a noose, so that said end portion of said second section of said rope can pass through said passageways to release said rope from said breakaway connector.

44. (new) The connection of claim 40, further comprising underwater gear connected to an end portion of said first section of said rope;

an end portion of said second section of said rope being tied up into a knot which must be untied before said end portion of said second section of said rope can pass through said passageways to release said rope from said breakaway connector.

45. (new) The connection of claim 40, further comprising underwater gear connected to an end portion of said first section of said rope;

wherein, when said first section of said rope is pulled towards the underwater gear, said first section of said rope presses said second section of said rope against a wall of said breakaway connector, thereby preventing the second section of said rope from slipping within the respective passageway.

46. (new) The connection of claim 40, further comprising a swivel;
said body further comprising a connecting portion connected with said swivel.

47. (new) The connection of claim 40, wherein
a width of said slot between said first and second end portions is increasable, by virtue of a flexibility of said body, to facilitate movement of a wall of an external member through said slot into said eye before the rope is attached to said breakaway connector; and

said rope being attached to said breakaway connector crosses said slot and prevents the external member from being disconnected from said eye of said breakaway connector.

48. (new) The connection of claim 47, further comprising said external member which includes a swivel.